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ABSTRACT

To teach creative writing effectively, teachers must be writers themselves and be willing to pass on their tricks of the trade to students. Conducted to determine what structures existed to help teachers pass on their skills, a survey of creative writing in high schools in the Chicago suburban area revealed a continuum, with only one school having no emphasis at all on creative writing, and no school matching the large, structured program of the Interlochen Arts Academy in Michigan. Most schools did teach creative writing, in regular English classes, creative writing courses, or both. Enrichment programs included media programs, guest speakers, and writer workshops. A majority of the schools published a literary magazine at least once a year and took part in writing contests. Funding usually came from English departments or from sales of literary magazines. To improve existing creative writing programs, talented writers need to be identified early and then encouraged to gain as much creative writing experience as possible, perhaps in formal creative writing or honors courses or through participation in contests. In this way, upper level creative writing courses will serve as advanced courses. Given the favorable attitudes revealed in a departmental poll, the necessary nucleus of committed teachers for such a writing program could be found. Enrichment activities that build a good writing tradition by involving and rewarding students are the final component of an improved creative writing structure. (Includes questionnaires and charts of results.) (JL)

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PROGRESSIVE NURTURING OF CREATIVITY IN HIGH SCHOOL WRITING CLASSES

Doug Shepherd

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Progressive Nurturing of Creativity in High School Writing Classes

Illinois Association of Teachers of English Fall Conference - November 13, 1982

Doug Shepherd -- Oak Park and River Forest High School, Oak Park, Illinois

Hi, writing teachers. I hope that you will find the remarks of this presentation useful. That is the end Ms. Schnede and I have in mind. I come to you directly from the classroom, unadorned with abstract or theoretic concepts, impressive publishing data, number of students taking prizes in writing contests, or intriguing strategies to be used in the classroom. I am in my fourth year of teaching two classes of creative writing each semester, along with three other regular English class teaching assignments. I sponsor the Crest staff, a school literary club that publishes two literary supplements to the school newspaper each year, and, we think, a neat literary magazine in the spring. Throughout my life I have written pieces for classes I've taken or because I was personally motivated to work something out on paper. So I have nibbled at the edge of the creative writing pasture for a long while. I suspect I am typical for high school teachers of creative writing classes. Some have written more, some less. Some have done an article on the subject and widened their sphere of influence and acknowledged expertise. I suppose I am trying to do something of the same in this presentation. What is more important, however, than publication vanity is my desire to put some structure where there is presently a minimal amount--to see if we can't improve our creative writing instruction so that young people graduating from our high schools will be encouraged to involve themselves seriously in a career or avocation of imaginative writing. How we can do that is the central question of this presentation.

What drove me to become dissatisfied with my two classes of creative writing and sponsorship of the school literary magazine? I felt the arrangement was loose. Not enough sustainedly good writing was coming forth. What pushed me light years ahead,

however, and thinking more in terms of a program for talented writers was an experience I had last spring. I took a seminar for teachers of creative writing offered by Mort Castle, a professional writer who knows the high school English classroom and the delicate art of motivating students to write and seek publishers for their stronger writings. The experience of writing in Mort Castle's seminar leads me to assert right now that the single experience most benefitting students of creative writing in high schools is having teachers who take writing courses or write on their own and have the feel of editors' reactions to their writings. As writing teachers, we are at our best when we are showing a student writer how to improve on what he has written. That's not new. But let's recognize that writers are full of tricks--tricks of the trade. One learns these tricks by learning the trade oneself--like learning to replace a water pipe or entire plumbing system. The plumber comes to do the same as you've read in the fix-it books. But there are tricks he knows from experience that work. And sometimes he has to say of the rules in the fix-it book, "That never worked for me; here's what I do and look how easy it is." When a writing teacher can pass on some of the tricks he has learned to make things go more smoothly, the writing instruction commences. Add to the tricks, a dedicated teacher's usual measure of encouragement, charm, and love, and you have the possibility of excellent results. I wish I could say that I am creating this writer's environment all the time. That's my target. I hit it when I can.

"Progressive nurturing of creativity in high school writing classes" means that I am interested in the structures that will permit a greater development of creativity and trick-working in teaching imaginative writing to high school students. By imaginative writing I mean writing poems, stories (short and long), plays and any other genre that is outside the purpose and approach of utilitarian writing. If you choose to argue that writing research papers requires creativity, thought processing and imagination to deal with old or new topics in new ways, I thoroughly support your position. If you choose to argue that the best kind of nurturing of creativity doesn't happen

in writing classes, I'll support that too, or at least attest that my research argues both sides with equal conviction--see Frank Smith's new book Writing and the Writer, page 211, "My own recommendation for how writing and reading should be taught is... they should not be taught at all. Children should learn to write in the same manner that they learned to talk, without being aware they are doing so, in the course of doing other things." Then there's Richard Hugo's chapter in the Triggering Town titled "In Defense of Creative-Writing Classes" wherein this poet-teacher reviews the standing antagonism between creative writing classes and the academics and attempts to bring peace and harmony between these two indispensable needs in literary education. On page 65, recalling an experience in a high school creative writing class that he attended in Seattle, Mr. Hugo philosophizes about the teacher's enthusiastic support of a personal account read by one of the students,

In the thirty-eight years since that day in McKensie's class, I've seen the world tell us with wars and real estate developments and bad politics and odd court decisions that our lives don't matter. That may be because we are too many. Architecture and application form, modern life says that with so many of us we can best survive by ignoring identity and acting as if individual differences do not exist. Maybe the narcissism academics condemn in creative writers is but a last reaching for a kind of personal survival. When we are told in dozens of insidious ways that our lives don't matter, we may be forced to insist, often far too loudly, that they do. A creative-writing class may be one of the last places you can go where your life still matters. Your life matters, all right. It is all you've got for sure, and without it you are dead. These days, the joke is even less funny.

Despite the semantic and substantive valuing of opposing positions, this paper supports the need for more, not less, creative writing classes and does so, along with Mr. Hugo's view, stated in the same essay, because they are here and serving a need.

Before turning to the structures to facilitate creativity in writing, I would like to acquaint you with a survey I took at the start of school this year. I wanted to know what the state of creative writing was in high schools in my Chicago suburban area, and so propose practical structures that could function within the range of existing departmental economies and philosophies. The results were interesting and to some extent expected. Fifty schools were polled; thirty five responded and form

a continuum somewhere between one school which declared, "We emphasize only expository writing in our writing instruction" to zero number of schools who maintain a creative writing program with specially trained instructors and constituting a major earning 1-2 years credit toward graduation. This latter item I later discovered did exist at the Interlochen Arts Academy in Interlochen, Michigan, a private school with special emphasis upon fine arts programs. It's the granddaddy of structured imaginative writing-programs of the Midwest. Creative Writing is a department within the English Department with its own chairperson and special staff. It features visits by guest speakers along with a writer-in-residence program. Publications include two literary periodicals and a bulky Review. Among other interesting activities, student writers are selected to go on reading tours, and the department conducts the National Youth Writing Competition. I mention all this because you should know it exists, and I will later read to you some of the school's detailed justification for a fine arts writing program.

In the interest of relevancy I would like at this time to ask by show of hand how many schools are represented as non-Chicago suburban? How many Chicago suburban? It's entirely possible that my survey samples do not reflect a more universal application. And so at this time I'm passing out a copy of the questionnaire and asking you to take a moment to fill it out and indicate both the name and location of your school. Certainly leave blank what you cannot answer and please turn in your copy at the close of this presentation so that I might have a more accurate measurement of where schools are throughout the state in their writing programs. And if your school has already responded, don't repeat what's already done.

To continue, I did not attempt to prove a point or assess a school's commitment to creative writing. I simply wanted to know what existed in the field, so to speak, along some continuum of imaginative writing instruction.

Appr. School
Enrollment

CREATIVE WRITING QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of School

Please place a check or X in the box which describes an aspect of a program at your high school. Fill in other information requested. Thank you.

I. Creative Writing at Your School

- ☐ Handled by regular English classes as part of class syllabus
- ☐ Have one or more sections of classes each semester designated as "Creative Writing"
- _____ Number of sections
- _____ Number of students generally involved
- ☐ Have multi-level structure of creative writing classes, i. e., Beginning and Advanced or Introductory followed by specialization of literary genre
- ☐ Have a program of creative writing major covering several years with specially trained instructors and earning English credits for graduation

II. Enrichment Activities

- ☐ Media programs
- _____
(list or describe unusual approaches)
- ☐ Occasional guest speakers on books, writing, publishing, etc.
- ☐ Visits by professional writers talking about writing and perhaps critiquing student manuscripts
- ☐ One-day writing workshops with guidance of professional writer
- ☐ Writer-in-residence program with at least one week of contact between students and professional writer, heavy emphasis on manuscript evaluation and revision

III. Publications

- ☐ Sometimes publish fiction writing in school newspaper
- ☐ Have a school literary magazine published once a year
- ☐ Magazine published twice
- ☐ Have a literary insert of student writings in school newspaper one or more times a year
- ☐ Publish a Review (large collection of student writings which may include writings from other schools, contest results, etc.)

IV. Contests

- ☐ Conduct own writing contest at school and award prizes to winning entries (or some public recognition)
- ☐ Utilize students and faculty to evaluate manuscripts for contests and publications
- ☐ Utilize external professional judges for contests (college faculty or writers)
- ☐ Submit manuscripts each year to local and national writing contests

___ 1-5

___ 6-10

___ more

V. Funding

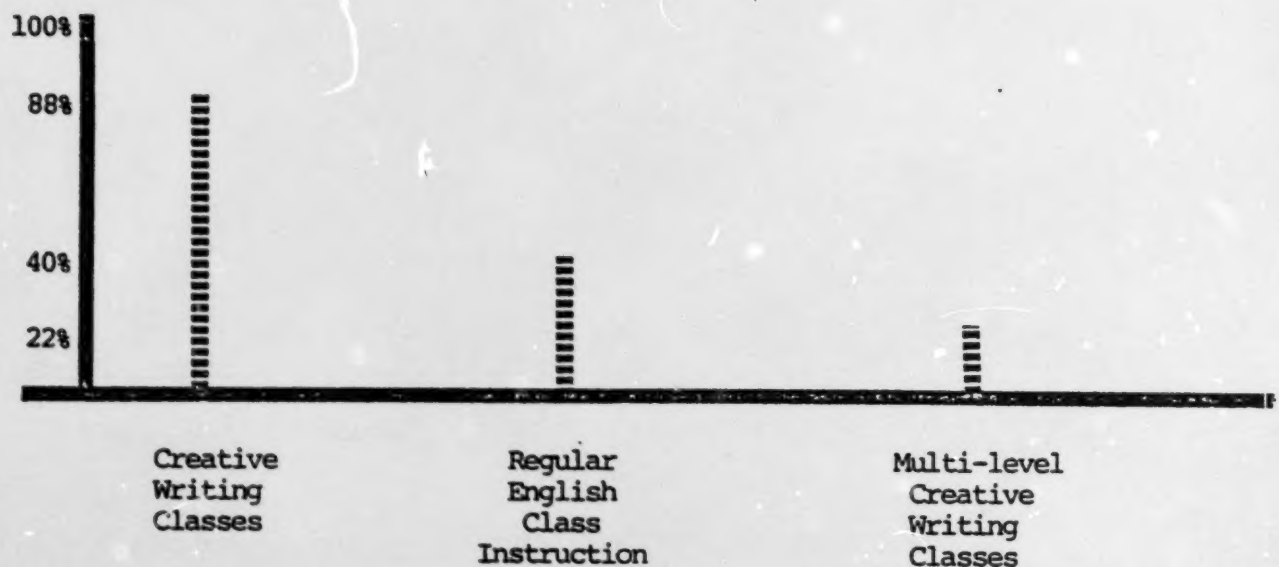
- ☐ No money available for creative writing expenses
- ☐ Must rely on advertizing fees to help pay costs of publications
- ☐ Use patron system or private donations
- ☐ Expenses are absorbed by English Department budget
- ☐ Use state money to cover some costs of program (Gifted, Arts Council, etc.) Please describe below any funding sources not covered by items.

VI. Most Successful Stimulation to Producing Good Writing (Say in space below which single venture tried at your school has yielded abundant, strong writing)

In Section I, "Creative Writing at Your School," forty percent marked item one (CW handled by regular English classes) while eighty eight percent indicated the existence of a creative writing class. In 29% of the respondents to this item, creative writing instruction goes on throughout the program and in a special course. The numbers do indicate that creative writing classes are alive and well in the suburban schools polled. There are approximately 70 sections of such classes or an average of 2.25 classes per school. The maximum number is six classes in a school, minimum one. Students are involved on an average of 50 students per school per semester. Twenty two percent of the schools indicated having a multi-level structure of creative writing classes. And finally, no public high schools marked the item describing what is essentially the Interlochen Arts Academy program in creative writing.

I.

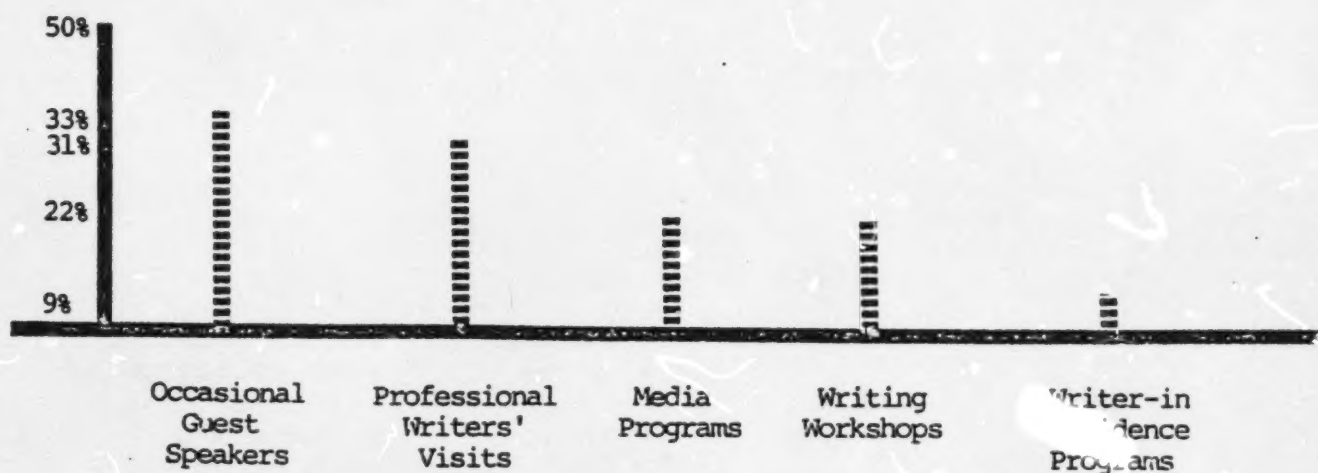
CREATIVE WRITING AT YOUR SCHOOL



Item II, "Enrichment Activities," (based on 58 responses) the total percentages of response were as follows: Twenty two percent utilize media programs of some kind ranging from filming students' written commercials to writing poems based on slides furnished by students. Thirty three percent have occasional guest speakers while thirty one percent incorporate visits by professional writers, and twenty two percent use these for writing workshops. Last, nine percent maintain a writer-in-residence program as part of their imaginative writing enrichment. My feeling is that this last item suffers most because of expenses as well as school's lacking the knowledge of how to begin. A little later Brenda Schnede, chairperson of our English Department, will detail the nuts and bolts of our writer-in-residence program.

II.

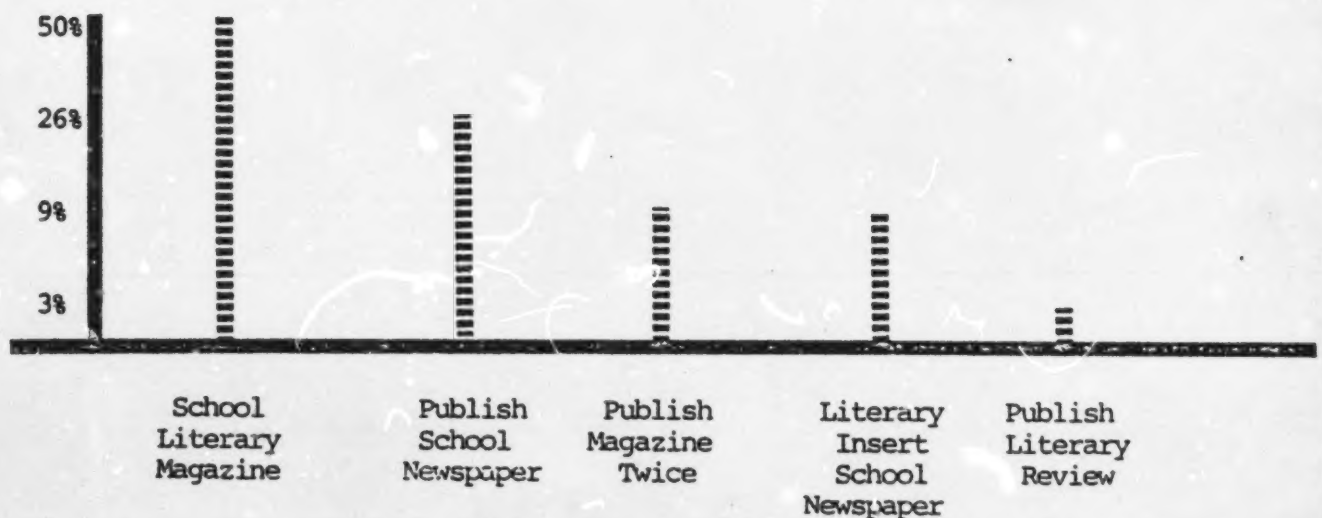
ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES



In the area of publication, Item III, (percentages are based on 53 total responses), twenty six percent of the schools published fictional writing in the school newspaper. Fifty one percent have a school literary magazine published once a year, one of those schools publishing a literary supplement in the yearbook. Nine percent publish such a magazine twice per year, and one of those schools reported a magazine publication four times a year. Nine percent have a literary insert in the school newspaper, one school apparently getting some space in every issue of the school paper. Three percent indicated publishing a Review, one saying that the publication was put together in a course other than creative writing. It would seem that the literary magazine is flourishing about as well as creative writing classes in school where imaginative writing is emphasized. In fact, a number of teachers under item VI at the end of the questionnaire regarded the literary magazine as their most effective stimulus to producing good writing in their schools.

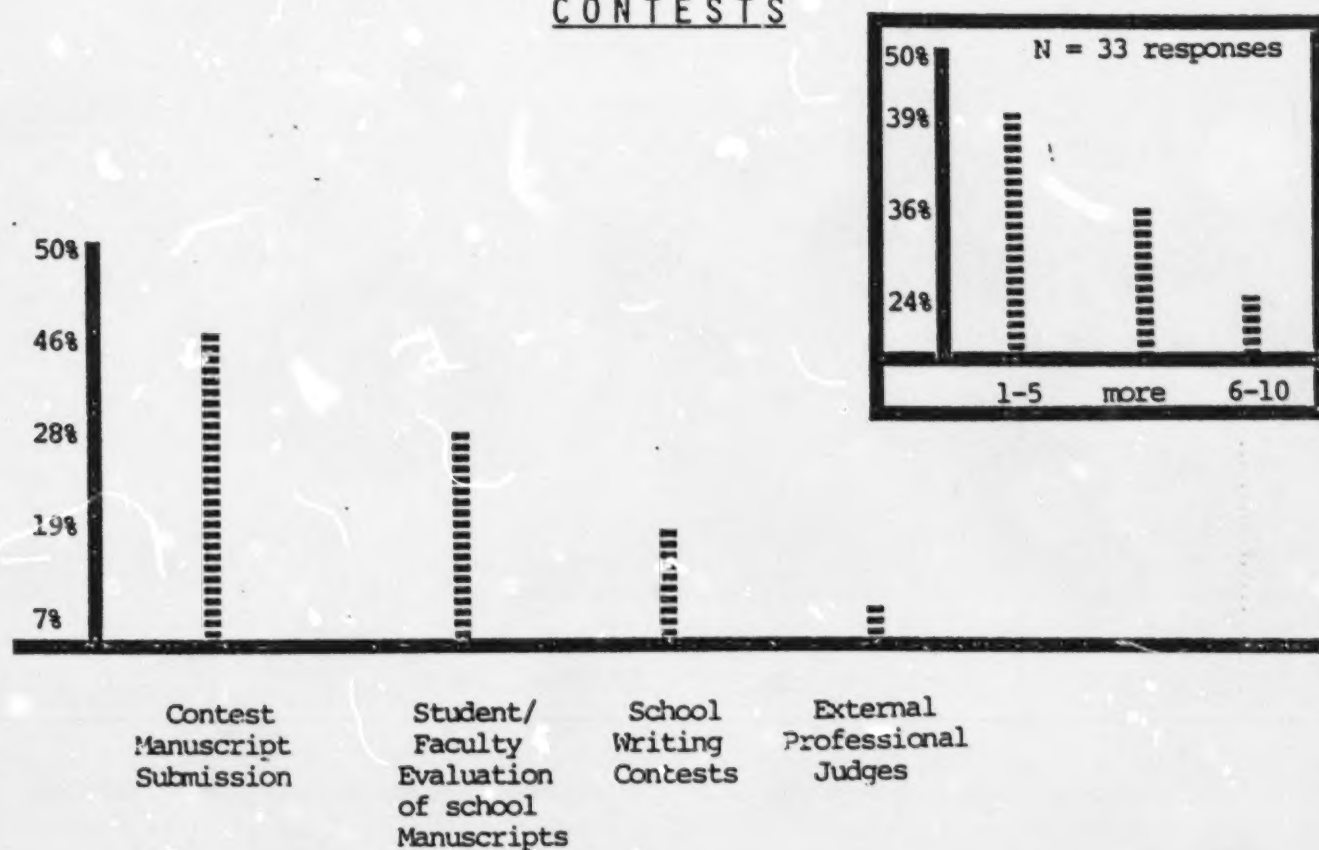
III.

PUBLICATIONS



Concerning item IV, "Contests" (based on 72 total responses), respondents marked as follows: Nineteen percent conduct their own writing contests, twenty eight percent use students and faculty to judge these, and seven percent seek outside judgment from professionals and forty six percent submit manuscripts to local and national contests. Broken down by amounts, thirty nine percent submit 1-5 manuscripts, twenty four percent 6-10 manuscripts and thirty six percent send out more. The practice seems to be, therefore, that most schools subscribe to the need for submitting good writings for contests as a stimulus to the writers in their schools.

IV.

CONTESTS

N = 72 responses

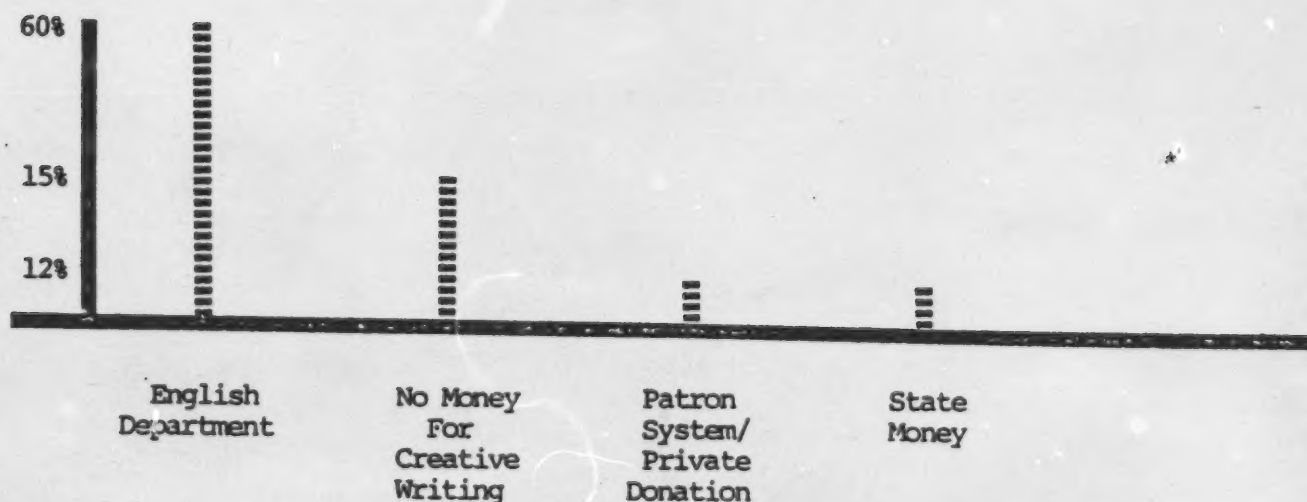
Finally, in the area of Funding (based on 33 total responses) item V, the respondents marked fifteen percent as having no money available for creative writing expenses, zero percent for use of advertising, twelve percent for use of a patron system, sixty one percent as having expenses absorbed by English Department budget and twelve percent using state or other sources for funding. Without regard for frequency of response, the following extra funding sources were indicated:

- 1) making a fee to students for purchase of the literary magazine
- 2) absorbing magazine costs in a student activity fee
- 3) selling subscriptions to magazines
- 4) partial subsidizing by school board
- 5) special account from the principal's office

The expense of publishing a literary magazine, it would appear, is borne primarily through the English Department budget or students' purchasing cost.

V.

FUNDING



N = 33 responses

A final item, VI, not tabulated, asked for a response to the question, "What do you consider the most successful stimulus to producing good writing?"

Here in random order are descriptive statements of the major responses.

- 1) Publish a student literary magazine of best writing
- 2) Incorporate a writer-in-residence program
- 3) Using a story workshop techniques of teaching writing as developed at Columbia College
- 4) The elective nature of the creative writing class--usually seniors interested in writing
- 5) Teacher discussing own writing experience with a given writing assignment
- 6) Workshops of visiting writers and poets
- 7) Assignment centered on early childhood reflections using scrapbook of old photos
- 8) A good teacher enthusiastic about writing and highly encouraging, works on a one-to-one with students
- 9) Involvement in New Jersey Writing Project
- 10) Writing using reading as a departure point
- 11) A contest offering cash prizes
- 12) A Book Club organization meeting weekly to discuss books and student writing, hear lectures, attend theater parties and organize seasonal social events
- 13) English Department Annual Usher-in-Spring Poetry Contest (teachers only) (teachers who write turn out students who write)
- 14) A Writer's Showcase for the parents of students who were published in the school literary magazine
- 15) Drama students presenting readings from literary magazines in an informal setting
- 16) Displaying writings in conspicuous location, presenting awards at assemblies and distributing class sets of literary magazines as a learning tool
- 17) A carefully designed sequential semester of developing writing skills
- 18) A. P. classes
- 19) Sharing writing in "feedback trios" (group of three) to get early reaction to writing; then sharing polished, final copies with the entire class
- 20) Contest entries for Harper College
- 21) In-class writing--half the period writing, half sharing the writing
- 22) Require students to write three or four lengthy short stories per semester (minimum of eight typed pages)
- 23) Using student journals as a source book for writing ideas (see Ira Progo's for source books, workshops) (student of Carl Jung)
- 24) Poetry workshops led by editor of small press magazine discusses poetry and critiques student writing
- 25) See Writing Incredibly Short Plays, Poems, Stories by James Norton and Francis Gretton, Harcourt Brace Javanovich Inc.

For more specific details of the above-mentioned responses, I would be glad to put you in touch with the particular high school making the statement.

The results of this questionnaire have been instructive and important as a departure point for suggesting a progressive system of nurturing creativity in high school writing classes. The Interlochen model is obviously the ultimate in structuring the teaching of imaginative writing. Its eight class creative writing department provides electives covering the junior and senior year and includes professional instruction in a writer-in-residence course, plus workshops for more informal group critiquing. These electives receive English credits and dovetail with the English Department requirements. But Interlochen Arts Academy is a private school with funds to support its fine arts orientation. No public schools surveyed in the Chicago suburban area revealed such a program although a significant number of these schools are incorporating some features of the Interlochen program. I suspect that money has been the principal deterrent to schools organizing such a program while lack of belief in its efficacy or suitability runs somewhere before or after the money concern. On the average, public schools have shown a pervasive belief that at least one creative writing class should be supported. Current programs also produce a literary magazine, organize enrichment activities such as workshops and writer-in-residence experiences, and become involved in writing contests. I am essentially describing my own school here and do not consider such efforts negligible or without effect.

For the rest of my part of this presentation, I would like to outline ways that I think we can shore up existing structures and create some new forms designed to intensify our teaching of imaginative writing. My assumptions are

- 1) A program stands to work better than no program.
- 2) Students with imaginative writing talent need to be identified and provided with opportunities to learn to become stronger writers.
- 3) We teachers need to show our belief in the value of imaginative writing by designing appropriate courses and giving graduation credit for such experience.
- 4) Admission to such a program ought to be contingent upon verbal ability and level of reading.
- 5) Continuation in a writing program ought to be based upon writing production.
- 6) Teachers who write themselves are the only ones in a position to render assistance to student writers.

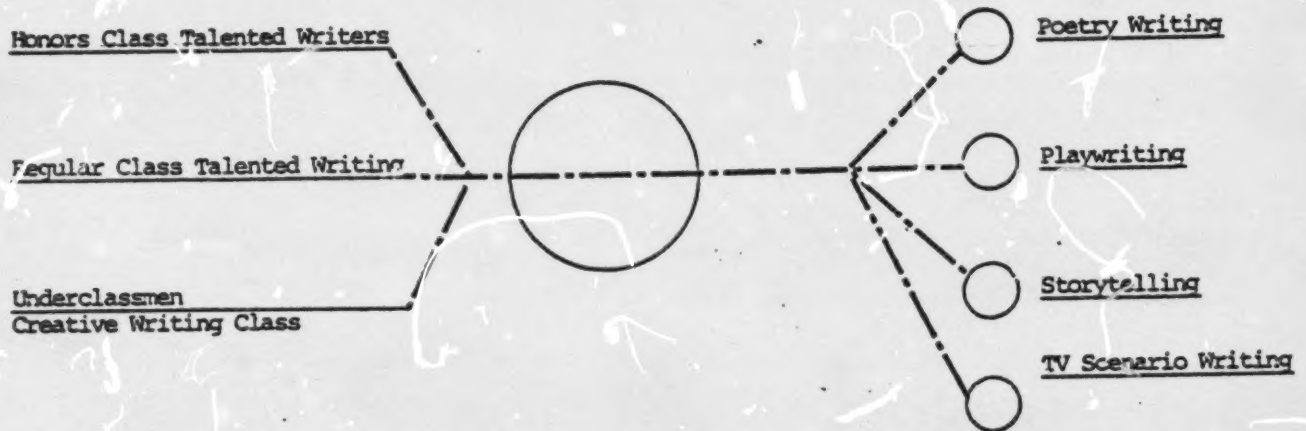
- 7) Writing for self-expression is fun for some for a time but unfruitful for most in the long run. Therefore, writing should be tied to publication or to some activity observable to the public.
- 8) A school ought to be serious about creating a strong imaginative writing program and establishing a tradition of the same. Public relations is a definite tool for indicating this seriousness.

My cards on the table, let's begin talking about what can be done between the ultimate of the Interlochen program which can't be afforded, and drips and dabs, which is a respectable effort but perhaps not as efficient as it might be. Let's consider first the ways in which the prevailing program of imaginative writing might be strengthened. As it stands, most schools offer a creative writing class that functions as a one-semester elective course for upper classmen. Admission procedure may vary, but I suspect that these classes are open to any students with a fair amount of ability to write and a desire to have experience with the various forms of imaginative writing--short stories, poems, plays, T.V. and movie scenarios. In other words, the class is a one-time experience with only scattered prior development of writing strengths and no followup of writing reenforcement once the class has terminated. It's a "drips and dabs" approach in contrast to some form of progressive nurturing that offers the possibility of intensification of writing skills learned over a period of time.

Two extensions for sequencing suggest themselves as possible structures not requiring much additional curriculum change or money. First, talented student writers need to be identified as early as possible and could be so identified in a writing sample during freshman year. (See "Sentence Combining" report, NAEP, 1981) (Also, A Model for the Evaluation of Student Writing, Grosse Pointe Public School System, 1982) The handling of this writing sample along with reading ability, interest, and teacher recommendation would be the criteria used for identification. These students could be "groomed" for the upper class creative writing class in one of two ways. They could be invited to enroll in a beginning creative writing class if electives are available to freshmen and sophomores. Or there could be

creative writing projects structured into classes where talented writers are most prevalent. (Honors courses, for one) For instance, in studying a particular biographer (Boswell's Life of Johnson), students might be asked to write a biographical sketch using the technique of a particular biographer. In the study of short stories, a teacher might ask students to take a particular theme and write a story illustrating an opposite viewpoint. The possibilities are limitless and could be designed and evaluated by the creative writing teacher or a small cadre of interested teachers for their departmental assignment. Obviously, the cooperation of all teachers in the department would have to be secured and a few course guidelines be implemented. One begins to see here the growth of possible contest and publication manuscripts. Students get classroom credit for their assignments and also the important experience of preparing manuscripts for contest submission.

So identified talented student writers should be encouraged to elect the upper class creative writing offering so that now this class becomes in effect an advanced creative writing class because of the prior preparation of its students. There is an obvious extension of this class into yet another creative writing offering with specialization in a particular literary genre. A student might elect to concentrate on the writing of poetry for one semester or learn more about playwriting. (The structure looks at this point like figure 1 below) I am in effect suggesting a multi-level structure of creative writing classes so that sequencing can take place. Eight schools out of thirty five (22%) in my questionnaire indicated that they have or have had such a program.

FIGURE IFEEDER SOURCESUPPERCLASSMAN OR
ADVANCED CW CLASSSPECIALIZED CW CLASSES

I am not describing here the content of such courses. A cadre of teachers could establish graduated imaginative writing exercises to build upon writing principals in some orderly way. Again, the aim is to lengthen the time and opportunity a student can write within a classroom setting and continue to refine his writing skills. To conclude this section, we ought to know WHO our talented writers are without waiting for them to "show up" when they have written something for contest. We need to treat them as talented writers and show our concern for their skills by offering a thoughtful, challenging program designed to support and shape their writing potential.

In a departmental poll conducted among my colleagues it was gratifying to learn that there was positive support for more creative writing experiences for students.

Opinion Questionnaire on Imaginative Writing

Note: The following questions are designed as a survey of attitudes concerning the teaching of imaginative writing within our department. Imaginative writing is the teaching and assigning of writing to include poetry, short stories, novels, plays, etc. Please respond to all items and especially #3 and 4, where you are asked to state feelings. Thank you.

- I. How much imaginative writing should be assigned and evaluated in English classes?

_____ $\frac{1}{2}$ of total writing instruction per class

_____ $\frac{1}{3}$ " " " " "

_____ $\frac{1}{4}$ " " " " "

_____ None. Let the honors English and creative writing teachers deal with this writing. All other classes should focus on expository writing skills.

_____ Other

- II. If you did agree to include some amount of imaginative writing in your classes, would you prefer to

_____ have some more experienced person come in to teach aspects of IW

_____ attend an occasional workshop to learn to teach IW yourself

_____ figure out your own teaching strategies after the IW content for the class has been established

_____ Other

- III. What feelings do you have toward the notion of some programming of class instruction so that students have a planned, sequential experience of IW over a 2-3 year period?

For the sake of discussion, let's say something would be dropped from the class syllabus to make room for this instruction.

IV. What feelings do you have toward the notion that talented imaginative writers could be identified by the end of freshman year, placed in a special two-year IW program that earns graduation credits, and be required to take the fourth year of English to experience some "core curricular-musts"?

V. Do you see yourself ever involved in a small group of teachers responsible for an IW class, doing imaginative writing on your own under the tutelage of a professional writer, planning curriculum in some kind of IW program, and assisting other teachers to teach imaginative writing? (Include any qualifications.)

VI. Other remarks prompted by this questionnaire.

Over half of those who responded (64%) felt that at least $\frac{1}{4}$ of the total writing instruction could well be of a creative writing nature. Thirty five percent would be willing to have an experienced person come into the class to teach aspects of creative writing. Forty seven percent would attend an occasional workshop to learn to teach creative writing. Fifty two percent were willing to figure out their teaching strategies after the creative writing content of the class was established. Their conservatism showed itself more noticeably regarding questions on a 2 or 3 year program of isolating talented writers for the purpose of intensive creative writing instruction. But there is a willingness to do more in the classroom for our talented writers. My department obviously was not ready for the Interlochen model.

I have twice mentioned a cadre of teachers of creative writing because in my early thinking was the notion that a number of writing courses could be developed and maintained by interested teachers who saw the possibilities of a sequence of instruction and could work together to refine its effectiveness. First, I think it's unrealistic to assume that one teacher can do much alone even should he get so far along as to organize and teach multi-level creative writing classes. It would be a hopeless quagmire of paper work, planning, and loneliness begetting misunderstanding and exclusivity. One of the first criteria that I saw for such a group was that each member be willing to be involved in writing on his own during the teaching of creative writing classes. Again, my experiences with Mort Castle in the writing class last spring proved to me that the single most helpful activity of a writing teacher was that he be writing on his own, attempting to get work published, and having the advantage of expert critiquing of his efforts by a professional. I've read the major books on writing and most of the articles on teaching creative writing. Sometimes I've used what seemed good ideas, which sometimes worked and sometimes fell flat. Most of all I've come to respect as crucial to learning to write the teacher and student looking at one writing prepared by the student. The teacher shows how to rework, how to employ the all

important tricks to ignite and strengthen, how to chop. He does this with art and abundance because it's his love and training. The student sees possibilities, shares insights with the teacher. Something is going. A writer is learning.

So, along with other responsibilities, the cadre would meet weekly under the direction of a professional writer to share and critique that week's writings. I still see the importance of the concept even if there are only 2-3 persons involved, even if these same teachers are doing no more than volunteering their time to help with some creative writing instructions in a regular class about to try their hand at haiku poetry writing. In other words, I feel some portion of the department teaching staff must be willing to provide the groundwork for creative writing efforts in its school.

This final section of my presentation concerns enrichment activities. Some were reported from various suburban schools earlier in this presentation. I will list a few more and then turn the floor over to Brenda Schnede who will talk about the writer-in-residence program at our school. Philosophically, I feel that good writing is as much the product of a good writing tradition as it is individual talent. Hence, any activity that helps build that tradition is useful. We nurture creativity by expending effort in that direction. We make the investment in energy and what money we can garner for our projects.

- 1) Students can and should assist in the collecting of manuscripts of stronger writings and send these off to all available contests. (You can't win or place if you don't send).
- 2) All contest winners must get press releases.
- 3) Students must be taught manuscript form acceptable to editors.
- 4) Student writing should be directed to a publication market or some practical use. (Writers Market is the bible for marketable writings).
- 5) Original-writing readings should be performed before audiences in the public library or in school programs following publication dates.
- 6) A reading group could be organized to go on tour to perform at nearby and distant schools.
- 7) Students should become familiar with the portfolio of writings concept for contest purposes, qualification to writing classes, and job application.
- 8) Students need a list of available contests for the current year and some idea of contest specifications and deadlines. This list could be prepared by a literary club.

- 9) Writing workshops held at the school or attended elsewhere are usually reasonably funded and bring writer and writings into the spotlight where they need to help build tradition and a sense of investment.
- 10) Any kind of literary club which encourages students of like interests to meet and plan programs will highlight what's happening in the school's literary world.
- 11) Professional writers who live in the community should be cajoled into joining the school's literary effort.
- 12) See Steve Athanases of Arlington High School for the Art Fair concept, which features an all-day creative writing workshop.

Why do all this? I would like to quote a few of the applicable "Advantages of a Fine Arts Writing Program" listed in the brochure Creative Writing at Interlochen. They offer a strong defense of our doing more with what we have.

- 1) Personal Pleasure: Just as one listens to music for pleasure, so does an individual find life-long personal delight in writing--whether this be journal writing, private poetry, or publishable material in any genre.
- 2) Literary Appreciation: Once one has learned the various techniques involved in writing and has personally manipulated those techniques, he reads every new literary piece with enhanced appreciation.
- 3) Curiosity: Working to capture and reveal the details of his life and his place in the universe sharpens all the senses and adds a pronounced zest to living. Curiosity about self, others, and the world in general is an attribute that is too soon lost to the child who matures into twentieth-century complexities.
- 4) Career Decisions: Learning that one does not wish to devote university training to writing is as important for some persons as is obtaining the basic skills which will shorten advanced training for others.
- 5) Editing: Many students may not be able to earn a living in the art fields of their choice. If they have developed a solid background in a given art area, however, and have also acquired basic expository writing skills, they are prepared to not only write feature articles about their art interests, but also to edit journals, magazines, television documentaries, etc.
- 6) Humanities Training: Exploring the arts during the impressionable period of adolescence will enrich a student's total life thereafter--particularly if he elects a non-art profession such as medicine, law, etc.

I feel that such an emphasis upon imaginative writing instruction will do more for properly encouraging students to continue developing their writing skills than any other approach or ignoring the challenge altogether. And contrary to Frank Smith's assertion that such programs "teach children trivial aspects of literacy...(or teach them that) literacy is trivial," (p. 211), I see more positive gains for children and schools when teachers accept responsibility for this so-called privileged offering of the English program.